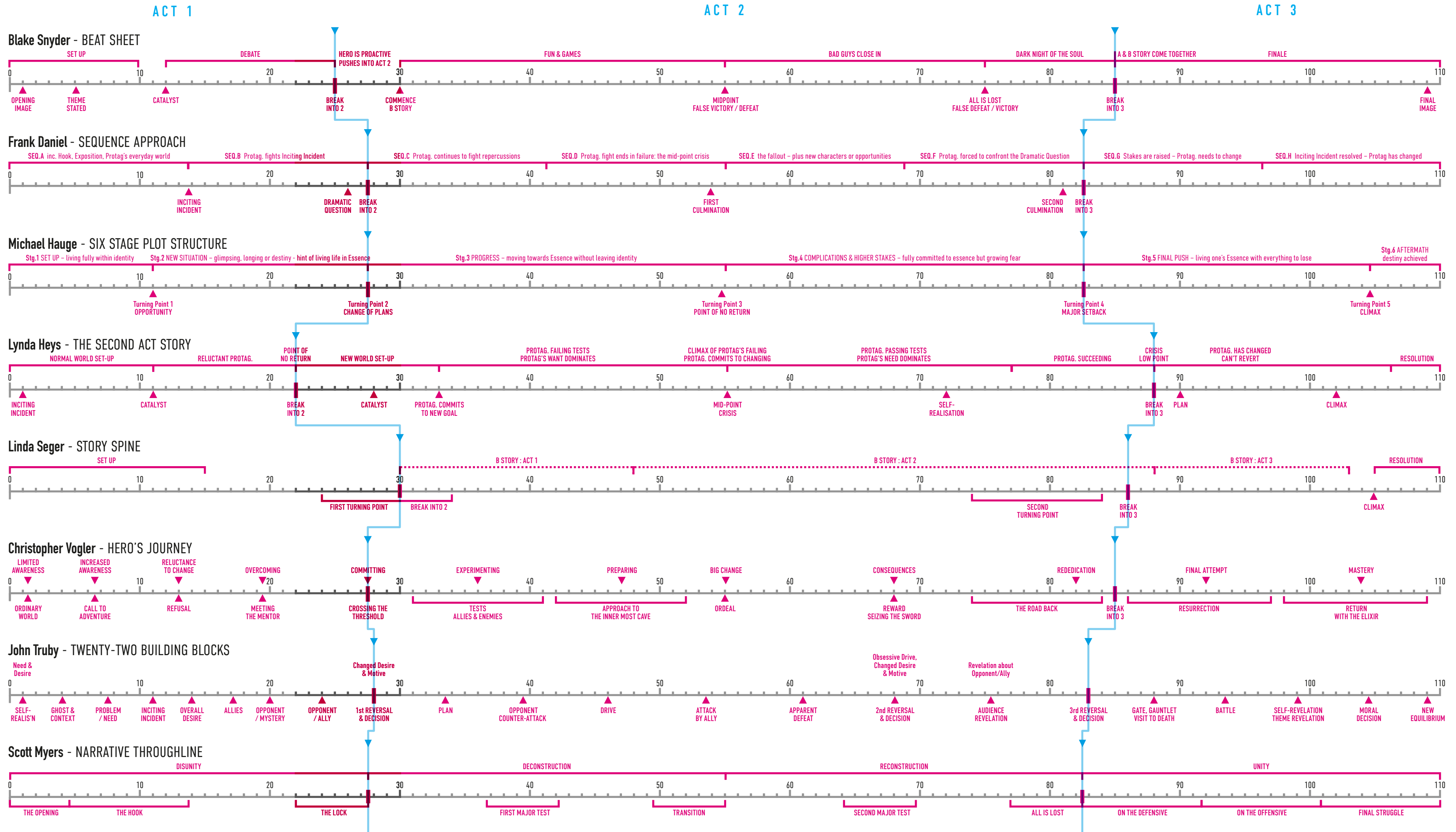# Screenplay Structure — a comparison between a selection of eight structural paradigms

For ease of comparison, all of the structural paradigms have laid out across 110 pages. NOTE: the structural paradigms as laid out here are based on my understanding at the time and are rough "translations" at best.

ACT 1   ACT 2   ACT 3

Blake Snyder - BEAT SHEET

SET UP · DEBATE · HERO IS PROACTIVE PUSHES INTO ACT 2 · FUN & GAMES · BAD GUYS CLOSE IN · DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL · A & B STORY COME TOGETHER · FINALE

0 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 90 · 100 · 110

OPENING IMAGE · THEME STATED · CATALYST · BREAK INTO 2 · COMMENCE B STORY · MIDPOINT FALSE VICTORY / DEFEAT · ALL IS LOST FALSE DEFEAT / VICTORY · BREAK INTO 3 · FINAL IMAGE

Unlike most of the others, Snyder was a fanatic about page counts and hitting your marks exactly – when he says the Second Act starts on page 25, he means it!

Frank Daniel - SEQUENCE APPROACH

SEQ.A inc. Hook, Exposition, Protag's everyday world · SEQ.B Protag. fights Inciting Incident · SEQ.C Protag. continues to fight repercussions · SEQ.D Protag. fight ends in failure: the mid-point crisis · SEQ.E the fallout – plus new characters or opportunities · SEQ.F Protag. forced to confront the Dramatic Question · SEQ.G Stakes are raised – Protag. needs to change · SEQ.H Inciting Incident resolved – Protag has changed

0 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 100 · 110

INCITING INCIDENT · DRAMATIC QUESTION · BREAK INTO 2 · FIRST CULMINATION · SECOND CULMINATION · BREAK INTO 3

Apparently, back in the days of silent movies, scripts were written as a series of SEQUENCES. Then, as the story goes, sound came in and playwrights got involved and stuffed it all up. Still, the sequence approach has its supporters.

Michael Hauge - SIX STAGE PLOT STRUCTURE

Stg.1 SET UP – living fully within identity · Stg.2 NEW SITUATION – glimpsing, longing or destiny – hint of living life in Essence · Stg.3 PROGRESS – moving towards Essence without leaving identity · Stg.4 COMPLICATIONS & HIGHER STAKES – fully committed to essence but growing fear · Stg.5 FINAL PUSH – living one's Essence with everything to lose · Stg.6 AFTERMATH destiny achieved

0 · 10 · 20 · 30 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 110

Turning Point 1 OPPORTUNITY · Turning Point 2 CHANGE OF PLANS · Turning Point 3 POINT OF NO RETURN · Turning Point 4 MAJOR SETBACK · Turning Point 5 CLIMAX

Third paradigm and now the third term for basically the same thing: CATALYST, INCITING INCIDENT and OPPORTUNITY, which has a nice positive vibe that fits with the "fulfilling one's destiny" theme that he's working with here.

Lynda Heys - THE SECOND ACT STORY

NORMAL WORLD SET-UP · RELUCTANT PROTAG. · POINT OF NO RETURN · NEW WORLD SET-UP · PROTAG. FAILING TESTS PROTAG'S WANT DOMINATES · CLIMAX OF PROTAG'S FAILING PROTAG. COMMITS TO CHANGING · PROTAG. PASSING TESTS PROTAG'S NEED DOMINATES · PROTAG. SUCCEEDING · CRISIS LOW POINT · PROTAG. HAS CHANGED CAN'T REVERT · RESOLUTION

0 · 10 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 100 · 110

INCITING INCIDENT · CATALYST · BREAK INTO 2 · CATALYST · PROTAG. COMMITS TO NEW GOAL · MID-POINT CRISIS · SELF-REALISATION · BREAK INTO 3 · PLAN · CLIMAX

Basically a more detailed version of the three-act structure where the long Second Act is given its own three-act structure. Something that can also be applied to sequences and scenes.

Linda Seger - STORY SPINE

SET UP · B STORY : ACT 1 · B STORY : ACT 2 · B STORY : ACT 3 · RESOLUTION

0 · 10 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 100 · 110

FIRST TURNING POINT · BREAK INTO 2 · SECOND TURNING POINT · BREAK INTO 3 · CLIMAX

The original diagram in Making a Good Script Great was pretty free form so there was some guesswork in translating it into this format. The "B Story" refers to a major subplot, like a romance.

Christopher Vogler - HERO'S JOURNEY

LIMITED AWARENESS · INCREASED AWARENESS · RELUCTANCE TO CHANGE · OVERCOMING · COMMITTING · EXPERIMENTING · PREPARING · BIG CHANGE · CONSEQUENCES · REDEDICATION · FINAL ATTEMPT · MASTERY

0 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 80 · 100 · 110

ORDINARY WORLD · CALL TO ADVENTURE · REFUSAL · MEETING THE MENTOR · CROSSING THE THRESHOLD · TESTS ALLIES & ENEMIES · APPROACH TO THE INNER MOST CAVE · ORDEAL · REWARD SEIZING THE SWORD · THE ROAD BACK · BREAK INTO 3 · RESURRECTION · RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

Based on Joseph Campbell's work on mythic story structure, some of the terminology needs to be treated 'poetically'.

John Truby - TWENTY-TWO BUILDING BLOCKS

Need & Desire · Changed Desire & Motive · Obsessive Drive, Changed Desire & Motive · Revelation about Opponent/Ally

0 · 10 · 20 · 30 · 40 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 100 · 110

SELF-REALIS'N · GHOST & CONTEXT · PROBLEM / NEED · INCITING INCIDENT · OVERALL DESIRE · ALLIES · OPPONENT / MYSTERY · OPPONENT / ALLY · 1st REVERSAL & DECISION · PLAN · OPPONENT COUNTER-ATTACK · DRIVE · ATTACK BY ALLY · APPARENT DEFEAT · 2nd REVERSAL & DECISION · AUDIENCE REVELATION · 3rd REVERSAL & DECISION · GATE, GAUNTLET VISIT TO DEATH · BATTLE · SELF-REVELATION THEME REVELATION · MORAL DECISION · NEW EQUILIBRIUM

Truby makes it clear that while some of his 'blocks' need to stay close to where he put them, others can be moved around and even reordered to suit the needs of the screenplay.

Scott Myers - NARRATIVE THROUGHLINE

DISUNITY · DECONSTRUCTION · RECONSTRUCTION · UNITY

0 · 10 · 20 · 30 · 50 · 60 · 70 · 80 · 90 · 100 · 110

THE OPENING · THE HOOK · THE LOCK · FIRST MAJOR TEST · TRANSITION · SECOND MAJOR TEST · ALL IS LOST · ON THE DEFENSIVE · ON THE OFFENSIVE · FINAL STRUGGLE

An extrapolation on the ye olde Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis model. Myer's paradigm is based on a 120-page script, so it doesn't look quite as elegant when compressed down to 110.

Robert Bruinewoud @ Assorted Projects 2020